

APPOMATTOX

A POEM



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A POEM

By

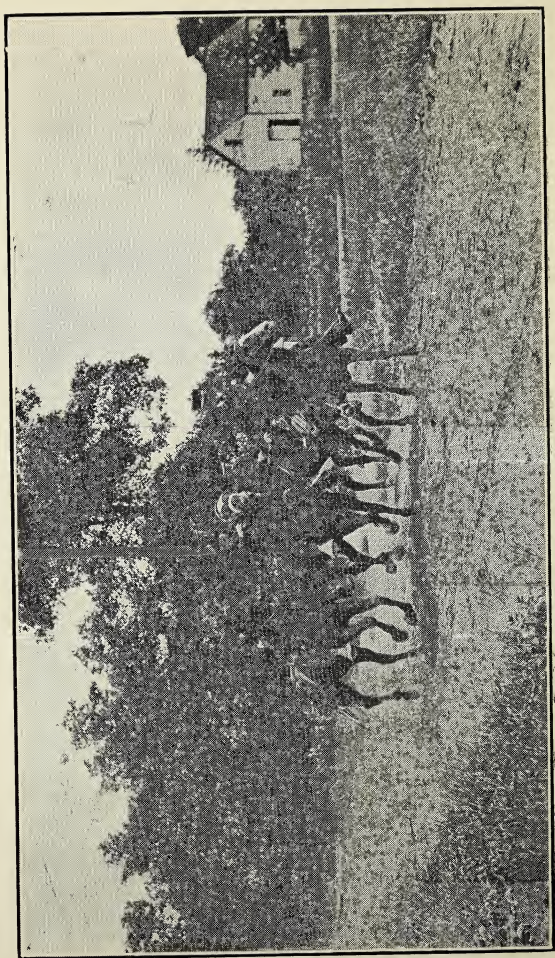
W. H. POLHAMUS

Late of the Second Ohio Volunteer Cavalry

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE SECOND OHIO
VOLUNTEER CAVALRY AND THE TWENTY-
FIFTH OHIO BATTERY, BOTH THE LIVING
AND THE DEAD, THIS LITTLE BOOKLET IS
LOVINGLY DEDICATED.

I knew them as very few can know.
We fought for years, a common foe.
I've seen them on picket, seen them in camp,
On the hot, dry dessert, in the dismal swamp,
Braving the heat of our Western plains
Where the sun would fairly bake your brains,
On the Winter march, in the rain and snow,
By the blazing camp fire's ruddy glow,
I've seen them on many a battle plain
Facing the storm of leaden rain
Nor saw them courage lack nor lag,
Nor turn their back upon our flag.
Be their station in life either low or high,
The world grows poorer when such men die.

—THE AUTHOR.



Fifty years ago my comrades,
So the army records say,
We were mustered into service
And set out that very day
For the field of Appomattox,
O'er a long and bloody way,
With a very vague conception
Of the price we'd have to pay.
Yes,—the field of Appomattox,
There to meet a host in gray,
Veterans of a hundred battles,
Pride of South Land under Lee.

Ah! the way was long and dreary,
And the foe was ever near;
And oft' times our hearts grew weary
As we toiled on year by year;
But each fierce succeeding battle
Told us that the day would come
That would end the cannons' rattle
And the dreaded roll of drum,
For our arms would be successful
And our warfare would be done.
So like young and sturdy yeomen
We pressed on, for well we knew
We must meet these haughty foemen
On their field of Waterloo.

We went out like many others,
Singing patriotic song,
As we told our weeping mothers
That the war would not be long.
Yet for four long years we pressed it
From the rivers of the plains
Down through Kansas and Missouri
And the famous Ozark Range.
From the shores of old Kentucky
To the hills of Tennessee,
All the way was strewn with comrades,
Boys who fought with you and me.

Then we joined the Eastern army
On the Rappahannock shore,
And took part in fierce engagements
That would number half a score.
From the fight at Bloody Angle
Where the riddled oak tree fell,
To those struggles 'round Deep Bottom,—
That epitomy of Hell.
Then we took the trail of Early
And like bloodhounds in full bay
Sent them "Whirling up the valley"
As our little Phil would say.

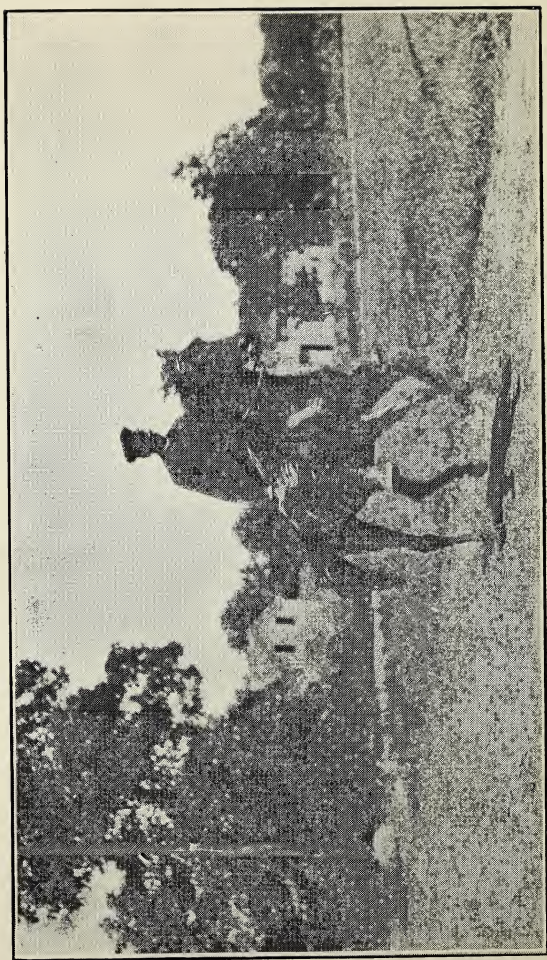
Yes, we sent them up the valley
Very much against their will;
Through Opicken, through Front Royal,
Snickers Gap and Fisher Hill.
On through Cedar Creek and Staunton,
On through Strausburg, on through Bley
To the field of Appemattox
While dead comrades marked the way.
Yes—the field of Appomattox;
There we brought the foe to bay
And compelled them to surrender,
All that mighty host in gray.

Then the battle field grew silent,
Ceased the cannons' deafening roar,
Ceased the groans of maimed and dying,
For the cruel war was o'er.
And we laid aside our armor;
Laid aside both sword and gun,
And werè mustered out of service,
And our army life was done.
Ever since in peaceful callings
We have done what we could do,
And at times seem past recalling
That we ever wore the blue.

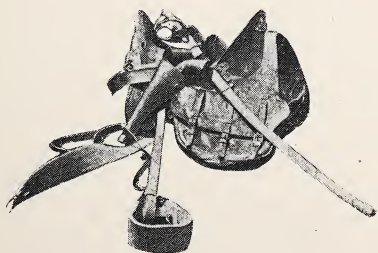
But we've seen our land united
This fair land we love the best,
From the rivers to the ocean,
North and South and East and West.
So that coming generations
And the poor across the sea
May enjoy a land of freedom
Handed down to you and me.
Yes—we've seen our land united,
And men learn to know its worth,
And our flag is now respected
To the corners of the earth.

We're older, comrades, older
Than in eighteen sixty-one,
When with shoulder touching shoulder
Our long march was first begun.
But our lives have not been wasted
Nor our marches been in vain,
For we've always been united
And our purposes the same.
We've stood for equal justice
On the land and on the sea,
And for purity and honor
And those things that make man free.

Deeds of valour, fame or glory,
In the future as the past,
Will be themes for song and story
Just as long as time shall last.
Tell they yet of Yorktown dreary
Where Cornwallis met defeat,
Sing of Perry on Lake Erie
He who sank the English fleet.
So adown the coming ages
Men will not forget the day
Nor the field of Appomattox
Where we brought the foe to bay.



Comrades, age is creeping o'er us,
 Bending form and furrowed brow
Tell us that the work before us
 We should each be doing now.
For e're long we'll hear the bugle
 Over on the Mystic Shore
Bidding us to final roll call
 To be mustered out once more.
And when we have crossed the River
 Where our souls shall be set free,
May we find each missing comrade
 Camped beside the Crystal Sea,
Waiting there for you and me.



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